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Smaller Posters Please

By JOHN M. SMITH, Agent, West Dumbartonshire

THE DOUBLE CROWN IS DEAD; killed by a dose of TCPA. I am not referring to the end of some regal personage, but to the Double Crown poster which met its doom with the advent of the Town and Country Planning Act. No more can we sally forth at dead of night to plaster the town, with a glorious disregard for the feelings, and the paintwork, of others.

There are few places outside of big cities which have suitable hoardings for this size of poster and still fewer Agents who can afford to spend sevenpence a week for display. We have to develop a new, or expand an old method of showing the flag. The simplest way of doing this is by using the window poster, and no housewife, unless she is desperately short of curtains, will tolerate a double crown for this purpose.

What we want is something small, but colourful. The 'Safety Week' posters are an excellent example, illustrating that loss in size need not mean any loss in attractiveness.

On The 'Panel'

You have to pick your hoarding. If you do have to hire a few sixteen-sheet sites you will find that the smaller poster lends itself much better to 'panelling' and a really attractive show can be got up with brightly coloured pieces. Have a look at some Post Offices and you may see what I mean. A hoarding on the far side of a railway embankment will not do. Most small towns have some hoardings about street level where the usual gigantic lettering cannot be read except by stepping off the pavement and endangering life and limb. These are often shunned by commercial advertisers because they cannot be read easily from the other side of the street owing to interruptions by traffic.

Now this is the place for you and if it happens to be near a bus stop, you can give the queuers education while they wait. But do not plaster one hoarding with a score or more of the same poster. In Scotland, at any rate, the feelings of the average man are outraged by such an obvious waste! Real repetition is the same thing cropping up in a number of different situations.

What you want are photographs of your candidate, details of his meetings and several of the wide range of pictorial posters which are available. These, with some clever panelling, and a few snappy slogans will give an attractive and effective display. But remember, it's colour that counts. Nobody will stop to read masses of letterpress. Keep it brief.

You will probably have to pay special rates during an election. Therefore, give your billposter a sketch and insist that instructions are carried out to the letter.

A photo block of a convenient size (say 8 inches x 10 inches) to go on a crown sheet with your candidate's name is within the means of most Parties and is a really worth-while investment.

The crown poster is cheaper to produce than its big brother, but you will be surprised how little smaller it appears, especially if you do not clutter it up with useless verbiage.

It is also much easier to get cardboard of this size to knock up temporary hoardings for use in gardens. Packing cases with panels big enough for D.C. are very rare indeed.

At the General Election our Returning Officer issued an edict that no posters were to be hung on railings surrounding the Polling Stations. While we agreed with the principle, our electorate had become used to this kind of decoration, reminding them on their way home that it really was Polling Day and that this was the place for marking the all-important cross.

We overcame the difficulty by getting a number of large cardboard boxes to make solid cubes and covering them completely with posters. On the day these were dumped outside our own Committee Rooms, at the approach to a number of Polling Stations, and outside the railway station.

In elections, I wonder how many posters finish up as wrapping paper through lack of suitable sites? All our local posters were made small and we got a grand show in places where hoardings simply don't exist.

Well, then, Head Office; what about it? A series of posters for the next election; small, bright and colourful: and Agents—save those packing cases!

Apathy and Local Parties

By J. N. NEWBY, Prospective Candidate, Truro

IN THE COUNTIES the Local Labour Parties meet in parish rooms, schools, private houses, even in bar-parlours. The value of these meetings is beyond assessment and the spirit which sustains the stalwarts who attend regularly, take the chair, sign the minutes and become involved in whist drives and jumble sales is the authentic pioneering spirit of Socialism.

Yet too often these people fight an uphill battle against one of our most insidious enemies—apathy. At election time our committee rooms are full, our members clamour for front-line jobs; but we lose much ground between elections through an apparent inability to infuse the ordinary party members with the enthusiasm that moves the officials and more active members. It requires enthusiasm and patience to send out your meeting notices in the almost certain knowledge that only the usual dozen or less will turn out. How many local parties too have you struggled to start in neighbouring villages only to have them threaten to die short-lived because the elected officials, often new in the movement, are not used to small attendances and consider giving up?

It is essential to prevent this disinclination of some of our members to attend branch meetings from discouraging those who do. The officers of newly-formed parties must be impressed with their duty to keep the nucleus of a working organisation always in readiness. This is the main object and can usually be achieved. But it is not enough: our task must be to enliven these branch meetings and through them the entire local party. It is imperative that we increase our attendance at these meetings—they are our best method of inner stimulation and self-education—but how can it be done?

Firstly our chairmen must be trained to get through branch business as rapidly as possible. While routine business is important, not only in itself but to let members feel that they are a real component of the national party, it is not enjoyed as much as some party officers appear to believe. Then, having got through this,

let us concentrate a little attention on the rather neglected 'Other Business'. Here is a magnificent opportunity for increased interest.

Some local project could be taken up under this head at first and then members should be encouraged to bring matters forward for discussion and action by the party. Local facilities, proposed additional transport services, installation of telephone kiosks, parish council actions or inactions, local industries—all these and a host of kindred subjects are matters that vitally touch the local members. If they feel the party is taking up their particular grievance or idea their interest in the meetings is quickened: and what wonderful propaganda if, as not infrequently occurs, the party achieves its object.

A good idea, and one not sufficiently used to attract members is the visiting informal speaker: the J.P., the Medical Officer of Health, Education officers or schoolteachers, Local Government officials and many others who may be sympathetic and can speak on a variety of topics. If they are a 'name' or their job one in the public eye they will work like a magnet on many members who might not otherwise attend.

If you are successful in gaining an increased attendance the next task is to keep them. The foregoing ideas if sustained will help, but an effective way is often to give them set jobs to do and reports to make.

Public events are important and good publicity. Besides the normal public meeting with your M.P. or candidate, try arranging meetings of the 'Any Questions' type with prominent local Socialists, or Conservatives if they will play. Challenge the local Tories to public debate on some important local or national issue. Do not neglect the social side, even if your dances, whist drives, and bazaars do not make much money they get your people together and keep the existence of your party before the public. And, above all, try to get your events reported in the local press, with names of leaders and helpers.

John Taylor

JOHN TAYLOR, a contributor to *Labour Organiser* for over 20 years, under his own name and as "Jack Cutter," has resigned his position as Secretary of the Scottish Council of the Labour Party on being nominated and selected as Prospective Labour Candidate for West Lothian.

During the week following his resignation the Annual Conference of the Scottish Council was held at Dunoon, Argyllshire. In his Presidential address, the Chairman of the Conference, Mr. George Welch, paid the following tribute to our colleague:

"For over a quarter of a century, John Taylor has served the Labour Party as an officer. For eleven of those he has been our Scottish Secretary and Organiser. Under his leadership the Party in Scotland has prospered, developed and expanded. Our membership at this Conference is the highest ever, and with characteristic modesty, John Taylor would not claim any share in this achievement, but would say it was purely a fortuitous circumstance. But we know better. He has been our most loyal servant and our most faithful comrade and friend. And so a parting like this is always keenly felt, but there is no need for poignancy, rather is there a deep pride within us when we reflect that he is on his way to a broader horizon where his unique talents and qualities will be more fully at the service of the Party and the people he loves.

"To the people of Scotland he is 'John Taylor, of the Labour Party'. To us he is and always will be 'Our John Taylor'. In his early years he freely chose to serve the Labour Party and so we came to know him. We realise he could just as easily

have been known to us a writer possessing great literary talents, a keen and fertile mind and rare insight; or a broadcaster whose calm commonsense could influence the nation; or a speaker whose eloquent sincerity could move great audiences; or an executive and administrator whose firm handling of affairs created unshakeable

confidence . . . whose delicate tact and judgment could penetrate the most complex of human problems.

"John Taylor is all these things and very many more. His manifold personal qualities reflect the essentials of all great Socialists. Outstanding in loyalty, the cardinal test of any man of the people.

"His devotion to the Labour Party in good times and bad and his jealous defences of every Socialist principle at all times heartened those who faltered and gave fortitude to us all. That was because his invincible faith in the rank and file of our Move-

ment could never be vanquished. To him politics is the art of being practical. And John Taylor's progressive mind quickly saw and grasped the fundamentals of Socialism while at the same time he applied new and original techniques to our problems.

"His combined virtues of loyalty and integrity and sincerity have won him a very special place in the ranks of the Movement . . ."

Until a new appointment is made by the National Executive Committee in conjunction with the Scottish Council, Mr. W. G. Marshall, Assistant Scottish Organiser, is filling the post as Acting Scottish Secretary.



Postal Vote Officers

By F. E. COX, Agent-Secretary, Gloucestershire C.L.P.

AFTER ATTENDING a series of conferences, meeting and listening to the conversation of colleagues from the Marginal Constituencies I have come, rather reluctantly in some cases, to form the opinion that too many people think we lost those seats at the General Election simply because someone did not trouble to send a nationally-known speaker along to address their constituents on the eve of the poll.

If this were the case then electioneering would be easy. Send along a Cabinet Minister or a member of the National Executive Committee and the Marginal Constituency would be ours. They, the 'National Speakers' might, after a few hundred meetings, suffer somewhat from the after-effects, but with the colossal majority we should command they could have the following five years off in which to recuperate.

We all have sympathy for those who voice this particular moan, it does give a boost to listen to a great speaker, but capable oratory, all important as it is requires something extra, and that something is a realisation of the fact that elections are now battles of organisation.

Let us face the facts; marginal seats will only be won, or retained, by an increase in the efficiency of our organisation; a job which must be tackled immediately.

We must make every effort to have a Local Party or Ward Party in every section of the Constituency where they are required—and they are required everywhere.

If it is not possible to form a Party at least one individual contact must be made. Even in the most seemingly backward area, from our political point of view, at least one good man can invariably be found willing to do good work in a village.

A Local Party, working hard and conscientiously, or a good, live-wire contact will poll more votes for the Labour Party than all the national speakers put together. Only those who live in the rural areas appreciate the power of local influence.

There are two points which marginal con-

stituencies should be paying very special attention to at the moment. In many cases if attended to they could cancel our opponents' majority, or where we hold the seat remove the prefix 'marginal.' They are the Electoral Register and the Postal Vote. There has been considerable improvement in the compilation of the Register but many Labour votes are still lost. Therefore it is imperative in marginal constituencies, that an all out effort is made to get every Labour voter on to the Register.

The second point, postal votes, is a sore one with most constituencies. It is useless expecting the majority of people to come and ask for the vote. We must build the machinery needed to search out our postal voters. We in South Gloucestershire are asking all our Parties to appoint a Postal Vote Officer. They have been asked to select this officer very carefully and to avoid, if possible, selecting the secretary or any officers who already have sufficient to do in the Party.

The P.V.O. must concentrate all his or her energies on the one job. When all the appointments are made we intend running a day school to make everyone concerned fully conversant with the ramifications of the postal vote. We are impressing on our P.V.O.'s that their work does not end when the list has been completed. They must see that the forms are filled in correctly, and in the case of invalids and blind persons take the forms to their doctor making sure that he does his job correctly too, and then see the applications posted safely to the Registration Officer. The target to aim at is a P.V.O. to every Polling Station.

Most County Constituencies have an average of at least 60 Polling Stations, and we believe that, taking a low average there are 30 postal voters to each Polling Station. This means 1,800 voters who normally would not have voted and in marginal constituencies, plus whatever comes along from the increased efficiency of the register this can mean a very valuable gain for Labour.



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The Youth Vote

By TREBREH

THE ATTENTION of all concerned is drawn to the significance and importance of the YOUTH VOTE which, for the first time, will be incorporated in the next Register of Electors. A wise and understanding Government has made provision whereby persons whose 21st birthday is *after* the 21 November, 1950 and *on or before* 16 June, 1951, can have their names entered on the Electors Lists and on the Register of Electors.

Let us examine in detail just what this is all about and be prepared to make every effort to ensure that all those so entitled shall have their names placed on the new Register of Electors.

Preparations are now going ahead for the compilation of the next Register. It is laid down that Registration Officers shall have a house to house, or other sufficient inquiry made as to persons entitled to be registered. Usually the R.O. causes FORM 'A' (Return by Occupier as to Residents) to be left with each occupier.

FORM 'A'

This has now been revised and I would like to draw your attention to two special points.

Under Part I, a new line has been added asking: Are there any persons with separate accommodation in your house or flat and not included in this return? Yes or No. . . . In my view this is a necessary and good question.

Under Part II, the third column now provides for the insertion of the following: Enter "Over 21" or if 21st birthday is after 21 November, 1950 and on or before 16 June, 1951 give date (see Note 4). Note 4 explains the position.

The importance of this must be plain to everyone. Here are some further details, suggestions and ideas regarding the Youth Vote which will be both useful and helpful.

ENTITLEMENT

Any person so entitled, whose birthday is after 21 November, 1950 and on or before 16 June, 1951, should have his or her name entered on FORM 'A' and it is up to each individual to make sure that their name is included.

All such names will be entered on List 'B' of the Electors' Lists—published on 10 January, 1951, also all such names will be entered on the Register of Electors—published and coming into force on the 15 March, 1951.

CLAIMS

If the name of any such person has been omitted from List 'B' a Claim can be made on Form R.P.F.5, which is obtainable from the R.O. All such claims must be received by the R.O. not later than the 24 January, 1951. If the Claim is allowed, then the name will be entered in the Register of Electors in due course.

MARKING

These names shall have the letter 'Y' placed against each entry.

WHEN ENTITLED TO VOTE

All such persons will be entitled to vote at elections held *after* 1 October, 1951.

COMMENTS

A person is of full age on the day before his or her birthday.

They will not be liable for Jury Service.

Let me again say that all persons, so entitled, who are 21 years of age after 21 November, 1950, but who will be 21 years of age on or before 16 June, 1951 are entitled to have their names entered on the Register of Electors but would not be entitled to vote until after 1 October, 1951.

All Agents, Secretaries and Organisers will now have an opportunity for making full use of a ready-made source of information as all such entries in the Register with the letter 'Y' against the name would indicate that such a person is round about 21 years of age. The information thus being available why not take full advantage of it with the object of bringing or inviting such persons into the League of Youth or other activities of the Party. Personal appeals, Invitations or an Organised Canvass could be sent or made.

By-election in N.E. Leicester

By C. V. WOODS, O.B.E., Agent-Secretary, Leicester Labour Party

IMAGINE FOR A MOMENT that you have just been informed that your constituency is called upon to defend a Government seat and you have the responsibility of preserving Labour's unbeaten record in Parliamentary by-elections since 1945.

Having just got safely over the thirtieth hurdle I can assure you it is an ordeal for the candidate, agent and party workers. You have a feeling that millions of people, in Britain and abroad, are watching you, some praying you will be successful, others hoping that you will fail. The tension increases day by day as polling day draws near. The Agent must go about his job with an air of cheerful optimism without a sign of what he feels deep down inside him.

Maintaining The Majority

You may ask what had you to worry about with a 10,000 majority at the General Election? The answer is that you are expected to maintain the majority, and as most Party members know, this is not easy in a by-election, particularly when the 10,000 majority was gained on a 86.6 per cent. poll. With such a majority there is always the danger of some of our supporters believing that the return of the Labour candidate is such a certainty that they need not bother to vote. A heavy shower of rain, as happened in Leicester, between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m., when the workers are leaving off work, can easily upset your calculations.

We knew on Thursday, September 28th, that victory meant that the Government maintained its slender majority, but we also knew that defeat might well have plunged the nation into a General Election almost immediately.

Our workers could not have done more that they did and it was no fault of theirs that the poll was only 63 per cent. of the electorate. The Tories did, as reported in the press, make an attempt to play down the election as a means of reducing the majority, but I also know from a source inside the Tory camp that their workers are not made of the same stuff as ours. Meaning, of course, that they have no faith to inspire them.

Let me get back to if you had a parliamentary by-election on your hands and try to make this article helpful to you.

The writ for the North-East Leicester by-election was issued on September 12th, latest date for nomination was September 18th and polling day was September 28th. Therefore, the campaign is of very short duration and you must get on with the preparatory work beforehand. Have your election envelopes addressed, photo blocks prepared, your election address lay-out in the hands of the printer, so that he can set it up and fill in the date later. As there are only 16 days between the issue of the writ and polling day your posters should appear as early as possible.

Remember that if it is a Labour seat your candidate has not been in the constituency as prospective candidate in the normal way, therefore he needs publicity. I decided that in A. L. Ungood-Thomas I had a candidate whose uncommon name had a publicity value. Up went 16 sheet posters with nothing more on than 'UNGOOD-THOMAS FOR NORTH-EAST LEICESTER' all over the constituency.

An interesting point about posters is that we put up some done with 'Daglo' paint and although they are now common in London ours were the first to be posted up in Leicester and as a consequence they attracted much more attention. Some of you may not have seen this new process of poster writing. Ours were red lettering on a black background and the letters stand out like an illuminated sign. They are extremely expensive costing three guineas each, but in places where they have not previously appeared they have been of tremendous publicity value.

The candidate must be seen and meet as many electors as possible, therefore let me give you the candidate's daily routine orders: 9 a.m., preparation of evening speeches. 10 a.m., press conference. 10.30 a.m., accompany loud speaker car into the shopping centres to speak to the housewife. 12.30 p.m., first factory meeting. 1 p.m., second factory meeting (these meetings should be properly organised in conjunction with shop stewards or union officials). 2 p.m., short street meetings, accompanied by members of the Women's Sections engaged in mass canvassing and literature distribution. 7.30 p.m., first public meeting. 8.30 p.m., second public meeting.

(Continued on page 19)

The Chairman

By GEORGE VAUGHAN, Barrister-at-Law

WHILST, subject to the limitations discussed earlier in this series of articles, the law allows complete freedom of speech as to the *content* of what is said, it does not, when a number of human beings are collected together for the purpose of serious discussion allow each person to exercise his right to free speech at the same time as his fellows.

If discussion is to take place and the exercise of freedom of speech not to degenerate into a useless and dangerous babble, it is necessary to have someone raised above the disputants who shall say who is to speak and when. Here the law gives legal sanction to the office of chairman.

The chairman derives his authority from his appointment. He may have been appointed by an annual meeting as in the case of local Labour Parties, or he may be appointed *ad hoc* at the commencement of the meeting.

As always, secret ballot is desirable, it spares the voters the embarrassment of openly avowing their preference. Any irregularity in the appointment of a chairman must be challenged immediately otherwise it will be accepted by the tacit acquiescence of the meeting and the chairman deemed to have been duly elected. Neither can one who is a candidate for the office act as scrutineer or as 'returning officer.'

The chairman's duty to preserve order and the powers with which he is invested by law in order to enable him to carry out that function has already been discussed. His second duty is to 'regulate the discussion.' Therefore, by law, no one has a right to speak except by the permission of the chairman, and he can, if he so chooses, withhold his permission quite arbitrarily. He need not, again, apportion the time equally among those who wish to speak—indeed it may be very difficult for him to do so. He has to decide when discussion is wandering from the topic supposed to be under debate—and close it down firmly if need be. He should insist that the meeting be addressed 'through the chair' to prevent altercations developing.

It is not generally known that irregularities in meetings can, if need be, be challenged by legal action in the courts. The action will, happily, not be in the form of a claim in damages against the Chairman for failing to regulate the meeting properly, but of a request for an injunction to prohibit the consequences flowing from the irregularity being put into operation.

Since the chairman is elected by the meeting, it follows that the meeting can, if it wishes, remove him. Chairmen who exhibit incompetences, partiality or obstructiveness are liable to be thus superseded. It has been truly said that an ideal chairman is he, 'who can steer a middle course with dignity, patience and tact, combining with these qualities those of firmness and determination.' In some meetings there is a tendency for those of greater experience to sometimes rapidly close a discussion with which they are out of sympathy. A chairman should not lend himself too readily to this device or he becomes merely an instrument for partiality.

The Common Law method of voting is by show of hands (secret ballots, it will be recalled, were only achieved after years of campaigning by Chartists and others), but every voter has the right to demand a 'poll', i.e. a counting of *heads* (a show of hands affords an opportunity for deception by raising both hands, which a 'poll' does not). If the chairman's declaration of the vote is not challenged by the immediate demand for a 'poll', then his declaration is conclusive evidence that a motion or resolution was carried or defeated and the Courts will not go behind his declaration to enquire what the facts were except perhaps in cases of fraud.

A chairman has no casting vote at common law. He has it only if it has been expressly conferred on him by the meeting or the organisation which appointed him. He can only use it when the voting is exactly equal—and it is generally agreed that he should use it to preserve the *status quo*, i.e. he should not by his vote procure any change in the position from what it was before he gave the casting vote.

HOW WOMEN'S

EVERYBODY NOW REALISES that the finest work that is done for the Labour Party is on the doorstep, and as a result of the training given in our Women's Section organisation the women of the movement have always given first-class assistance in this important work of visiting electors both during election campaigns and in general membership drives between elections.

For several years Women's Section members have concentrated during the summer months on propaganda work, especially in rural areas. Sometimes it is done by Women's Constituency Federations within their own Divisions; sometimes by Women's Advisory Councils. This year we have extended our work and given help to neighbouring marginal constituencies. In some areas special bus-loads have set off and 'attacked' villages; in others smaller groups using private cars or service buses have followed up the contacts made during election periods. Our experience has always been an increase in individual membership, and the establishment of new Local Labour Parties and Women's Sections.

But there is no need to confine this work to women members, and all party members can make a fine contribution to furthering Labour's Cause by these methods.

Yet how often do Parties follow up contacts made during the election? It is time we wakened up to the fact that organisation is as important as policy at election times, and in some constituencies our organisation is nothing like as good as it ought to be. There must be many villages and towns where following up would result in the formation of new Local Parties with consequent benefit to the Party both in membership and active work. No contact made should be allowed to drift, as so very often happens.

And it should be remembered that where following-up and propaganda work on the doorstep is done in marginal seats by members from other constituencies, it has a two-way effect—those who help benefit in experience, knowledge, fellowship and understanding, and by the joy of service which comes from helping others. Agents

and Candidates should provide the inspiration and encouragement for this most important work, and Women's Advisory Councils and Constituency Women's Federations have a role to play in co-operation with their Constituency Parties in this matter.

An example of what can be done comes from Derbyshire, where the women from our Chesterfield and District Women's Advisory Council organised a special bus-load to assist West Derbyshire. Following consultation with the Agent, the village chosen for their first visit was a Tory

by **Constance**

Here the Wor

Region gives

step campaign

stronghold; it was not an easy task—we had few, if any, local contacts. But it was helpful to West Derbyshire in that these women also spoke at an open-air meeting in the evening following their day's canvass, and recruited enough members for a Local Labour Party to be formed. It gave these miners' wives an eye-opener on the difficulties of rural areas. Most of these women, coming as they do from mining areas, are used to a welcoming smile from nearly every door; here they found a difference and were put on their mettle when they faced opponents. But they all thoroughly enjoyed themselves and plans

TIONS CAN HELP

are in hand for another visit to this difficult constituency.

This kind of work is of the utmost value to the Party. The real basis of organisation lies in individual membership, in attracting members to our meetings and in training them for future work.

But a membership campaign is most successful when systematic work is planned. While spasmodic help from relatively 'safe' constituencies to the marginals is very useful, regular systematic canvassing throughout the period of the campaign brings much better results.

rganiser for the Eastern
successful local door-
dominantly Tory areas

An illustration of this can be given from Northamptonshire, where the women from Northampton town gave practical help to South Northants constituency. The latter is a very scattered area: it covers 251,889 acres and has 118 villages and two small market towns. In such a rural area it is difficult to recruit and organise membership and party activity. And here the women from Northampton have done an excellent job. After consulting with the Agent, a plan was decided upon. Every Tuesday and Thursday has seen a gallant band of women setting off from the Labour

rooms in Northampton to give help to their neighbouring constituency during the summer. A different village was visited on each occasion, and every house in the village was canvassed. A Cottage Meeting each afternoon brought women electors into touch with the wife of the Labour Candidate, with the result that here no longer do they say that we only go to see them during the election!

None of this work could have been done so effectively except for the basic political education and stimulus which has always been a feature of our Women's Section meetings and Residential Schools. Every encouragement should be given to Women's Section members to take up serious work and they should never be regarded merely as good caterers and dish-washers! Women's Sections are an integral part of our organisation and have made a great contribution to the growth of our Party.

If this kind of work can be done in Derbyshire and Northamptonshire with so much success, it can be done in every constituency of the country. But systematic work on the doorstep needs a well thought-out plan. The results are well worth the time spent on working out the details. Agents would do well to encourage their Parties to act as Registration Agents. When the new electors' lists are available, all our man and woman power should be mobilised so that we can check up and use our visits to help to compile marked registers which are absolutely essential to sound organisation and most helpful in membership campaigns. Attention in the future will also have to be given to timing visits to electors. With the advent of television and its installation into many homes, we must avoid causing irritation by calling on electors during an attractive programme, and in planning our doorstep work due regard must be paid to this point.

Our Party cannot afford to carry passengers and armchair critics. More than ever the next election will be fought on the doorstep with the Opposition making a bold bid for the housewives' vote.

The Highland Advance Continues

reports A. R. PHILIP, Secretary, Ross and Cromarty C.L.P.

TWO YEARS AGO, in Ross and Cromarty, some six hundred miles from London, an ancient stronghold of Liberalism, represented to-day in Parliament by a pseudo-Liberal member; an area covering approximately 3,000 square miles, where communication by road or rail is, in many instances, both slow and difficult, and in winter sometimes impossible, there were a mere handful of Labour supporters bound together by no party organisation.

To-day there are over 1,000 members of the Labour Party in the constituency, a number that, however slowly, is nevertheless increasing, and represents one-sixth of the largest Labour vote recorded at a General Election in this constituency.

Mr. Will Marshall, Assistant Scottish Organiser, decided to put his reputation in pawn and travelled north to meet that handful of enthusiasts, to discuss with them the possibility of forming local branches of the Party, to advise them on the setting up of a Constituency Party, to draw up a constitution for them, and to help advance the cause of Labour in a hitherto forgotten area. To-day we feel that Will Marshall has more than redeemed his pledge.

The first difficulty to be overcome was persuading sufficient people to form local branches. With energy and enthusiasm, slowly but surely, members were made who in their turn took up the work of convincing others of the need for active concerted participation in the work of the Party.

Soon there were several branches in being, organised into effective units, officials and committees were formed, and programmes, political and social were drawn up and put into operation.

All this was done by people who had no previous experience in this work and although there were occasions when chaos confounded order, through the hard way of trial and error, these branches soon

became very efficient in the management of their own affairs.

All this of course was not done in effortless manner. Branches had many of their early meetings in the homes of different members, there being no money available to hire the village hall. And most members have long distances to travel to meetings.

Eventually a Constituency Party was formed but here the difficulty was in getting sufficient delegates to attend a central meeting, many of them having to travel such distances as required them to leave their employment for a whole day, and our finances were insufficient to recompense them either for their loss of wages or even their fares. It says much for their spirit that to-day, when we have excellent attendances at the Constituency Party meetings, held monthly, each delegate pays his or her own expenses.

Another difficulty was in keeping the branches informed of national policy and day to day information as it became available. We have tried to overcome this by sending circulars to the branch secretaries and giving delegates to the Constituency Party meetings as much information as is possible to present in turn to their respective branches.

Many, if not most of our troubles lie before us. There are large areas of the constituency still untapped. These are the areas where it is not unusual for one's neighbour to live two or three miles away, crofter communities where travel is difficult and uncertain, and we have not as yet the resources to tackle the job of going out to meet these people seeking their support.

Our plan is that with the assistance of our candidate and other speakers, meetings could be held in these districts. Support will be organised into Polling District Committees, assisted as far as possible by the Constituency Party and who may, if they wish, associate themselves with the nearest branch.

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Questions and Answers

Compiled by PAT CAVANAUGH, National Agents Department.

UNOPPOSED RETURN—TAKING OFFICE

Q. *Our nominee for a vacancy on the District Council was returned unopposed. The Clerk (also R.O.) ruled that he was not eligible to sit as a Councillor until after the date set aside as Polling Day. Surely if only one person is validly nominated when nominations close he is automatically elected?*

A. The ruling of your Clerk is quite in line with the District Council election rules. These provide that in uncontested elections the Returning Officer shall publish the notice of election not later than 11 a.m. on the day the election would have taken place. A person cannot take his seat as a Councillor until after the notice has been published.

ABSENCE OF BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

Q. *One of our Borough Councillors has left the town, and it is now six months since he attended a meeting of the Council. Is there anything we can do to cause a by-election?*

A. This is a case where the Council itself has to act and the only thing you can do is to draw the attention of the Town Clerk to the Councillor's continued absence. Section 63 of the L.G.A. makes provision for a member of the local authority to cease to be a member if he fails to attend any meeting throughout a consecutive period of six months unless the failure to attend is due to some reason approved by the local authority. Attendance at committee, sub-committee, joint committee meetings, etc., is deemed to be attendance at meetings of the local authority. The procedure to be followed is: for the Council to declare the office vacant at the next Council meeting and signify the vacancy by notice affixed to the Council offices. The vacancy must be filled within 30 days of the declaration. The only exception is when the declaration of vacancy is made within six months of the normal date of the Councillor's retirement. The vacancy is then filled at the next ordinary election.

AFFILIATED MEMBERS

Q. *Can a member of an affiliated organisation take part in the affairs of a Ward Committee without being an individual member?*

A. The Model Rules laid down by Annual Conference entitle members of affiliated organisations, who sign a declaration accepting the Constitution, Programme, Principles and Policy of the Labour Party, to enrol as members of a Ward Committee provided they reside or are registered as electors in the Ward. They are entitled to full membership rights except that they cannot be selected as Parliamentary or Local Government candidates. Our experience is that the advantages of such a provision far outweigh the disadvantages. Having once got an affiliated member to your Ward meeting it will not be long before he will appreciate the necessity for individual membership, and be anxious to play his full part.

SELECTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT CANDIDATES

Q. *I should be glad if you could give me a ruling as to eligibility of the Executive Committee to vote at the Ward Meeting when the selection of a candidate is made for the local elections?*

A. The Model Rules laid down by Annual Conference state that 'The selection of candidates shall be made from the list of members endorsed by the General Committee at joint meetings of the Executive Committee and the respective Ward Committees . . .' The fact that it is a joint meeting means that the Executive Committee members have the same rights of participation in the selection, including the power to vote, as the ward members. The rule in question works admirably and in practice the balance of power lies with the organisation which is alive and sensible to its duties. A ward that cannot muster more members at a selection meeting than there are members of the Executive Committee can hardly claim to be an active and responsible unit of the Party.

Attention to Two Registers

THE PRESENT REGISTER AND REMOVALS

THIS PRESENT REGISTER continues in force for another four and a half months, and any parliamentary election occurring in this period will be conducted on it.

The total of removals in any constituency amounts to a substantial number. Unless there is a track of these, a Labour vote would not show as high a total as might be available. This can be disastrous, as it was in a number of the constituencies in the February, 1950, General Election. No doubt many highly organised parties have effective schemes for dealing with removals and are continuously tracing and codifying them for the Absent Voters Lists. On the other hand, some party secretaries are seriously worried over the matter and are appalled by the possible work involved, and are allowing the business to slide.

This matter can be tackled in a simple but effective way. Consider a Ward Committee or a small local party facing this problem of tracing removals.

First—get a member or members in each street or road to make a note of any removal by neighbours.

Second—prevail on a member who is perhaps of the quieter sort—to undertake compilation of removals from lists sent in by the street recorders. He can be regarded as the Ward Removals Officer.

In neither of these tasks is the job likely to be onerous, and it ought to be easy to get the jobs undertaken.

Now as to any detailed procedure—

The street recorder of removals could be supplied with a list or marked portion of the Register indicating supporters, so that in case of any removals of these he can ascertain their new address and advise them as to their entitlement to the A.V. for a parliamentary election. If each recorder could readily be supplied with two or three forms R.P.F.8, he could then get the removees to complete the forms and post them to the R.O. In any event, the street recorder in the simplest way can notify cases of removal and new addresses to the Ward Removals Officer. The Agent or Secretary or the Ward Removals Officer can then follow up the cases to secure for them the Absent Vote.

During the next four months much could be done by every party to codify the removals in their areas by such simple means. Of course, where nothing has been done previously the street recorders should be asked to ascertain what removals have hitherto taken place and inquire as may be convenient into the new addresses of such persons. Friendly milkmen, postmen and neighbours may give bits of useful information.

To sum up—something can be done during the next four months to trace removals on the present Register. A member in a street can take tally of any neighbour removing. He or his family can ordinarily get some information as to their prospective or new address where such are supporters. It is a matter of local arrangement as to how such information shall be followed up by the Street Recorder or Ward Removals Officer to secure that the person or persons do apply for the Absent Vote.

THE NEXT REGISTER AND FORM A

Householders' Form A

The first preparations for the next Register are now starting. The qualifying date for the Register to be issued on March 15, 1951, is in England and Wales Monday November 20, and in Scotland, Friday, December 1. The Registration Offices are distributing Form A—the Return by the Occupier as to Residents—to all dwellings.

It is to be expected that the B.B.C. will, as usual, broadcast information and reminder to people as to the filling in and return of the Forms.

It is imperative that Constituency and Local Labour Parties should press upon members and supporters the necessity to fill in the forms, and duly post them. Information and appeals should be circulated through local journals, news letters, or leaflets. *Members should be prompted to remind and help supporters in their own roads and streets to be sure of getting their names on the Register.* Last year there were many cases of omissions, and in view of the urgency for Labour to have every available vote to call on, it is a high responsibility on every party to ensure that every supporter's name is registered. On this occasion a Reminder Form R.P.F.32 is available for use by R.O's.

Young Persons

Attention should be drawn to Note 4 on the Householder's Form A. 'A person whose 21st birthday is after November 21 and on or before June 16 will be entitled to vote at elections held after October 1. (A person is of full age on the day before his 21st birthday)'. Column 3 on the Form provides for stating 'Over 21' for those who are of full age, and for the date to be given if the 21st birthday occurs in the period November 22 to June 16.

Service Persons

Persons in the Forces who are not already registered as voters must fill in the declaration form F (VOTE) 33 obtainable at their Unit or Ship. This should be posted as early as possible, and must be received by the R.O. by January 24 at the latest. Members who have contacts with persons in the Services should be prompted to mention this matter in their letters.

Writing to the 'Organiser'

RECENTLY an *Organiser* was heard to wonder why such and such a person had so many articles published in the *Labour Organiser*. He agreed that what this contributor wrote was invariably good stuff, but, at the same time appeared to have a doubt in his mind that one name should appear so regularly.

The answer, from the point of view of the Editorial Staff who have the compiling of the *Labour Organiser* is a simple one.

Briefly it is that this regular contributor appears in print because he *contributes* regularly and because his contributions are invariably of a sort which we welcome.

For some thirty years now the columns of *Labour Organiser* have been open to anyone with something interesting and informative to say on those specific subjects in which the magazine specialises.

Many readers may not realise that that special organisational problem which they faced and then successfully solved; that new slant which they have developed; that new idea which they have conceived and put into successful practice will most likely be of value to their counterparts in other places.

This is one of the primary functions of the *Labour Organiser*, the dissemination of such suggestions and information

among people active in the propagation of Labour's Cause. Therefore, if you have developed something new either on an old problem or on a new, write it up and let the rest of the Labour Movement have the benefit of your knowledge.

Organisation is of extreme importance. In advising Labour to be ever ready with its preparations for another Labour victory, Miss Alice Bacon, M.P., the new Chairman, puts Organisation at the head of her list.

This magazine which you are now reading is the vehicle through which the wider aspects of organisation and electioneering are carried to the Movement. It will prove of little use to one district or one specific Party evolving something new unless every district and every Party hears of the development as well.

The simplest idea may contain valuable assistance towards strengthening our organisation and building up our membership. It is vital that information be passed on.

Let the *Labour Organiser* have your articles, the more the better. By doing so you will be assisting everyone. Only through the sharing and the passing on of new ideas can we increase and reinforce the already extensive organisation lore possessed by the Labour Party.

Union Notes

By L. H. M. HILLIARD, General Secretary

THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS to our 33rd Annual Conference reported in full in last month's *Labour Organiser* set the standard for our gathering. Looking back it seems to me that we had one of the best, and possibly the most constructive conferences, for many years. Certainly, we had the largest attendance and that in itself is a sign of healthy progress. The decision to carry London District's motion on 'constitutional reform' was a wise one and means that the Executive Committee can, during the coming year, devote itself to consideration of ways and means to re-organise our union in the light of our present stage of development and at least give some thought, if not immediate action, to the development of permanent staffing and office provision ending the rather indefinite and undefined basis of organisation that has prevailed in the past. We can look forward then to new ideas and proposals being urged upon members by the Executive Committee during the coming year and probably an even more interesting and worthwhile conference next year.

The 'Agent's Night' now seems firmly established at Conference on the Monday and certainly at Margate this year, with the help of the 'Dreamland' organisation we put on a good show. We are grateful for the support which we received not only from our members but from the delegates from constituency parties who came along and joined in the evening's fun.

The news from Yorkshire of an attempt to form a 'breakaway' organisation for what are called 'part-time' agents has given us some concern. We hope that good trade unionists will keep clear of this body, and that it will not receive the support of the C.L.P.s. The Association of Part-time Agents is not recognised by this union nor by the Labour Party, although I understand that one of its declared objects is to secure recognition by both these bodies. Perhaps it is as well that the Union's attitude towards this Association and our reason for 'non-association' be explained, as well as our claim that it is, in effect, a 'break-away' organisation.

The rules of N.U.L.O.E.A. already provide for 'Part-Time' membership where such an appointment has been made in consultation with Head Office of the Labour Party and this Union and where both parties are satisfied that a 'full-time' appointment cannot, for the time being be made. All 'regularised' and 'permanent' part-time appointments are within the terms of membership of this union so that an alternative body of 'Part-time' agents is not only unnecessary but undesirable. Further, the union watches such 'regularised' part-time appointments with care and is constantly seeking to get them 'raised' to full-time appointments when the opportunity occurs. This process is a continuous one and has worked well to the advantage of the movement.

What purpose is this new body supposed to serve? Although it has not been stated it caters only for 'temporary' part-time agents appointed on varying understandings from now until the General Election. It has been expressly agreed between this Union and the Labour Party that such appointments shall be of limited duration, shall be temporary in character and that all grants and payments in respect of same shall terminate after the next General Election. It will be obvious, to any Trade Unionist, that recognition of such appointments would mitigate against full-time members of this union whose living is involved. An attempt is being made then to secure permanent recognition and negotiating machinery for a body of 'temporary' employees. A retrograde step and one which would have serious results upon the present agency structure to which the Labour Movement is deeply indebted for loyal and devoted service over the years.

We all know that 'part-time' and 'Voluntary' agency arrangements are undesirable in the very nature of the present complexities of party organisation such arrangements cannot produce long-term and lasting progress. It is time that the movement faced up to its responsibilities in this matter.

If we are to have an organising service covering all constituencies, integrated on a national basis, one of two things must

happen. C.L.P.s must be bolder; must take full advantage of the very generous grants now made towards the salary of a full-time agent, and make 'full-time' appointments, accepting financial responsibility for same; or a means must be found of 'pooling' our financial resources so that the Labour Party could accept full financial responsibility for all party organisers and agents so ensuring that a service is provided in all constituencies adequate to the demands now made by the movement.

Surely it is time that we made a determined effort to break away from 'tinkering' with this agency problem? Year after year conference considers resolutions urging the development of the party's agency service and the provision of more full-time organisers. How can this be achieved when side by side with the building up of a full-time service goes the acceptance by many C.L.P.s of unregularised and unofficial 'part-time' arrangements often involving 'full-time' service for 'part-time' rates?

The Association of Part-time Agents is symptomatic of the disease that infects us. The Labour Party should be a model employer. No full-time agent should feel

that his livelihood is being threatened constantly by irregular appointments.

This union feels that in only one way can we build a 'national' organising service and provide real security for the party's agents, and that is by Head Office accepting full financial responsibility for all appointments. It is about time that the Labour Movement faced this issue and made up its mind on the matter?

Of course it is a little difficult for us as a Union to put our point of view to the movement. We are grateful to those constituency parties who supported a motion at this year's conference which would have given party agents the 'right to speak' and express a point of view on the development of the agency service and the organisation of the party.

We shall continue, however, to do our best to present our point of view to constituency parties amongst whom we find an increasing sympathy for our union and its desire to secure reasonable conditions of employment for party agents and we hope to convince the movement, ultimately, that agency service is a 'national' problem and will have to be finally solved on a 'national' basis.

KEN v. CATCALL

If someone asks you an awkward question, **pertinent or impertinent**, or makes a dubious statement about present-day developments—there are several ways of dealing with him.

- (1) You can knock him down (**depends**)
- (2) You can ignore him (**difficult**) or shout him (**boring**)
- (3) You can tell him anything that comes into your mind (**easy but temporary**)
- (4) You can give him an accurate and truthful reply (**devastating**).

On balance the latter course seems the most sporting, but the snag is: You must know your Facts.

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READERS WRITE . . .

AT THE END of 1949 membership of North Hanwell Ward Party (Ealing, London) was just over 200 with attendance at meetings about 15.

At the meeting in September last, with over 60 present it was announced that the roll had exceeded by considerable figures the 1,000 mark.

How has it been done? Just straight hard work.

The General Election brought in a few youngsters, and half a dozen of them decided to get down to the business of boosting membership and increasing interest. Canvass, canvass and still more canvassing was the theme and by June 500 new members had been enrolled.

This figure only whetted their appetites and during the next few months the figure rocketed to its present happy state.

Coupled with the membership drive, literature sales have also been pushed. We now have over 150 regular subscribers to *Fact and Talking Points*, six dozen to *Labour Woman*, and are disposing of pamphlets in their hundreds.

HUBERT E. NETHERCOAT,
Hon. Secretary.

WE READ with much dismay the article which appeared some time ago in *Labour Organiser* entitled 'Running A Lottery'. This Party had previously discussed the position of lotteries, raffles, draws, sweepstakes, etc., very fully, and we decided that these practices contradicted the true conception of Socialism. We submitted a resolution to our Divisional Party Executive Committee asking them to make a similar decision. This was done.

We realise the difficulty met by Local Parties in raising money; we have the same difficulty ourselves, but surely we in the Labour Party must have principles and set standards of behaviour if we are to progress.

Lotteries, raffles, etc., encourage people to get something for nothing, to try to cheat life rather than to face up to it.

It is infinitely better to have money given by a convinced Socialist than to extract money from people by these methods.

ANNE E. H. PROSSER,
Hon. Secretary,
Knutsford and District Labour Party.

Congratulations To . . .

LEICESTER LABOUR PARTY for producing a brochure (*50 Years of Progress*) which not only does credit to Leicester Labour Party itself, but to the entire Labour Movement. To handle it, even without opening the cover and reading the contents one is made aware of the status to which the Labour Party as a national movement has attained when one of its component parts, and a very important component part can attempt, so very brilliantly and successfully, the production of a brochure such as this.

Leicester can take all the credit in the world for so richly commemorating the jubilee of the Labour Party and its own proud record.

Written by Mr. William Howard, O.B.E. M.A., he brings to bear his profound knowledge and his long and intimate association with the Labour Movement in general and in Leicester in particular and his own fine gift of literary expression to make possible for readers to form just estimate of the great service rendered by countless men and women to the Labour Movement, to the nation and the world, and therefore to Humanity.

Obviously great care has been taken in the production of the brochure. Printed on rich art paper, its lay-out is exemplary with an excellent collection of photographs of many of the men responsible down the years for the elevation of the Labour Movement in Leicester.

One characteristic feature of the Leicester Labour Party throughout its history has been its loyalty to Party decision democratically reached at the annual conference of the National Party. It is true that the Party in Leicester has had its difficulties with 'popular fronters', 'united fronters', 'fellow travellers', and other egregious splinter organisations which reared their heads from time to time and finished in the limbo of oblivion, but their efforts to sow dissension have always been defeated by the good sense of the great majority of the Party members. They have come and gone and have left no trace.

Copies can be obtained from Mr. C. Woods, O.B.E., Secretary, City of Leicester Labour Party, 29 New Walk, Leicester. price 2/6, post free, per single copy. Six or more copies 2s. per copy.

(Continued from page 8)

This is a strenuous programme and each evening the Agent looks anxiously at the candidate to see how he is standing up to it. Incidentally, questions on steel and Korea were singularly rare. The electors of a working-class constituency are in the main concerned with bread and butter politics.

One of our trump cards was the publication of a really first-class Election Special. We are deeply appreciative of the assistance of Derek Agnew, of the Press Department at Transport House, who was completely responsible for the production. It was a winner all the way.

In the De Montfort Hall, Leicester, where the count took place, the atmosphere was tense. Conversation was carried on in hushed tones. At last the Returning Officer announces—Arwyn Lynn Ungood-Thomas elected. Our concealed emotions broke loose and we may perhaps be excused for lustily singing the “Red Flag” and “Land of My Fathers”.

We had served the Cause and it is a Cause worthy of the best endeavours of each and every one of us.

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